



Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Joseph Horwedel
Hans Larsen

SUBJECT: DIRIDON STATION AREA PLAN STATUS REPORT

DATE: November 6, 2009

Approved

Date

11/10/09

COUNCIL DISTRICTS: 3 and 6

SNI AREAS: Burbank/Del Monte

Delmas Park and

Greater Gardner

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the Community and Economic Development Committee accept the status report on the Diridon Station Area Plan.

OUTCOME

Staff is continuing to prepare the Diridon Station Area Plan as described in this status report, and in coordination with the potential Major League Baseball Ballpark process now underway.

Primary outcomes to be accomplished through the Diridon Station Area Planning effort include the following:

- Engage the public in the land use and Station Area planning process to capture the unique and significant transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities associated with a regional transit hub with interconnected bus, Light Rail, Caltrain, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE), BART, Amtrak, and California High Speed Rail (HSR) services.
- Establish a plan and policy framework to guide future development and redevelopment within the area toward land uses that support transit ridership and create a world-class entertainment/recreation-related destination connecting with and enhancing the greater Downtown and nearby neighborhoods.
- Expand Diridon Station to create a well-integrated, highly functional center with iconic architecture to be a model of sustainability. Develop and implement urban design standards to promote a walkable environment in the Station Area, with exciting public spaces.

BACKGROUND

The Diridon Station Area Plan was initiated in June 2009 upon the City Council's acceptance of a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Station Area Planning Grant and approval of a consultant contract for the Plan to be completed by June 30, 2011. Assuming Council adoption of the Station Area Plan, staff and the consultant team will then prepare General Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments, as appropriate, to provide a policy and code framework for implementation of the Plan.

The Diridon Station Plan study area consists of approximately 240 acres located near the historic center of Downtown San José, just west of Highway 87 and the Guadalupe River, and 1.5 miles south of the San José Norman Y. Mineta International Airport (Airport), and centered north-south on the existing Diridon Station (see attached map, Attachment No. 1). This area has been the subject of previous planning efforts upon which the Diridon Plan effort will build (see Attachment No. 2).

The Diridon Station Area planning process involves the creation of several scenarios for the appropriate expansion of the existing Diridon Station to embrace possible future BART and HSR, and set forth recommendations for a land use vision with implementation strategies, and TOD design guidelines. Diridon Station is planned to have enhanced multimodal network connections to support a 24-hour/7-day-a-week commercial and entertainment center as part of the expanded Downtown Core. Design of transportation infrastructure plays a key role in defining the Diridon Station planning area and defining its subareas. Existing rail lines, waterways, highways, and street overpasses create many challenges to auto, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity throughout the planning area. Diridon Station is the major transportation gateway or "front door" into Silicon Valley and the City of San José's historic downtown and primary cultural center, located along the Union-Pacific/Caltrain/Amtrak/ACE right-of-way. Already a major transit hub, Diridon Station may become one of the busiest multimodal stations in California and the western region of the United States with the proposed Silicon Valley Rapid Transit (SVRT) BART extension to Silicon Valley and the proposed HSR project to San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Importance of Diridon Station to Silicon Valley

Diridon Station is poised to become the major regional transportation hub for Northern California, providing bus and rail services with local, State, and national connections. Planned increases in service for existing operators, as well as an envisioned future BART station and a possible future station for HSR could increase considerably the number of commuters using the Station, and raise the significance of the Station and surrounding area to the region and the State. This creates an unparalleled opportunity for iconic, world-class architecture and urban design of the Station and its surroundings to celebrate its role as a major gateway to the City of San José and Silicon Valley.

The Diridon Station Area includes the existing Diridon Station building, a nationally registered historic structure, with associated registered structures and grounds, for which the most appropriate role and functions will also be considered through the Station design process.

ANALYSIS

Initial Work Plan Efforts

Since June 2009, staffs from several departments and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency have been working closely with the selected consultant team and staff from outside transportation agencies to complete the tasks in the first phase of the Diridon Station Area work plan:

- Interagency Collaboration on Guiding Principles. The City of San José is completing the Plan in coordination with the Redevelopment Agency, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency (VTA), Caltrain/Joint Powers Board (with purview over the existing Diridon Station building, associated structures, and grounds), the California High Speed Rail Authority, and MTC. These entities are working together to agree upon a set of guiding principles to focus the Plan's evolution to capitalize on the significant opportunity of the potential investment of BART and HSR in Downtown San José with the flexibility to accommodate a Major League Ballpark as a component of the study.
- Public Outreach and Stakeholder Involvement. City and Redevelopment Agency staff have begun engaging stakeholders and the general public in the progress of the Diridon Station Area planning effort and the parallel process for exploring a possible Major League Baseball Ballpark using several methods of involvement. These include ongoing Diridon Station Area Good Neighbor Committee meetings, a series of area tours for the general public and Committee members, stakeholder interviews for property and business owners in the area including the HP Pavilion team, and a broad-based half-day Community Workshop attended by approximately 100 interested members of the public on September 12, 2009. Additional outreach using these forums will continue throughout the Plan process.
- Publicity and Marketing. City and Redevelopment Agency staff have engaged in events to broaden public awareness of the importance of the Diridon Station area planning effort and to garner additional input and vision for development potential. These efforts include participation in the Urban Land Institute TOD Marketplace held in Downtown San José on September 26, 2009, and a Harvard Graduate School Design Studio on Diridon in spring 2009 in which design students developed alternative visions for a Diridon Station Area Plan.
- Existing Conditions Report. A draft existing conditions report for the Plan area prepared by the consultant team has been reviewed by City and Redevelopment Agency staff. The consultant team is currently preparing a revised draft to incorporate City comments.

Progress on BART and High Speed Rail (HSR)

Progress on the Diridon Station Area Plan is entwined with efforts to: (1) plan for the possibility of a ballpark in the area; (2) select alternatives for a possible preferred HSR alignment; and (3) determine the placement of the functional aspects of a future station relative to existing rail and the potential for BART. Options that best accommodate the potential ballpark are part of the analysis.

The High Speed Rail Authority is currently proceeding with a preliminary alignment analysis for the Diridon Station Area. This analysis is examining seven alternative alignments through the area

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including two underground options. Over the next three months both City and HSR staff will be completing a parallel outreach process to present the results and recommendations of the study with the goal of determining the viable alternatives and to propose City recommendations for a preferred HSR alignment.

Next Steps Through 2011

Upon some refinement of possible scenarios for the High Speed Rail station and alignment in San José, and confirmation by the City Council, the Diridon Planning process would move forward with key next steps:

- Work with the team of multi-agency transportation staff and engineers to design an expanded Station footprint to function with any preferred alignments being explored and provide well-integrated transit functions.
- Hold a second Community Workshop to explore possible land use scenarios with interested community members.
- Refine land use scenarios, and work with stakeholder groups and the larger community to recommend a preferred scenario for confirmation by the City Council.
- Prepare a Draft Plan for public review and comment.
- Prepare an Environmental Impact Report to provide environmental clearance for the Draft Plan and to facilitate subsequent environmental review to support changes to existing policy/regulatory documents, capital improvement projects, and private development proposals subsequently needed to implement the Plan.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Office of Economic Development, Mineta Airport, the Redevelopment Agency, and the City Attorney.

CEQA

Not a project.



JOSEPH HORWEDEL, DIRECTOR
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement



HANS F. LARSEN, ACTING DIRECTOR
Department of Transportation

For questions please contact Susan Walton at 408-535-7847 or Manuel Pineda at 408-535-3850

Attachments: (1) Map of Area and (2) Summary of Previous Plans

Attachment No. 2 -- Previous Plans That Inform the Diridon Station Area Plan

Many of the subareas in the Diridon Station Plan Area have been addressed in previous plans adopted by the City of San Jose including:

1. The Midtown Specific Plan (adopted 1992, amended 2005 by City Council) which provides development guidelines for a 210-acre industrial and commercial service area situated south of West Santa Clara Street and west of Los Gatos Creek. The goal of the Midtown Specific Plan is to create a mixed-use community that includes high-density commercial and residential areas that are geared toward public transit, while maintaining existing service and industrial uses in the area.
2. Strategy 2000: San José Greater Downtown Strategy for Development (adopted 2005 by the City Council) which provides a long-range conceptual program for revitalizing the traditional Downtown through the expansion of the Downtown Core Area and through higher density infill development and higher intensities on undeveloped and underutilized sites. The Guiding Principles of Strategy 2000 are as follows: make the Greater Downtown a memorable urban place to live, work, shop and play; promote the identity of Downtown San José as the Capital of Silicon Valley; create a walkable, pedestrian-friendly Greater Downtown; and promote and prioritize development that serves the needs of the entire City and Valley.
3. Diridon/Arena Strategic Development Plan (adopted 2005 by the City Council) which covers the following areas: Arena North, Julian North, Stockton Corridor, Ball Park, and Station East. The Plan includes strategies and actions to: complete the Downtown Riverfront Park encompassing the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek as local and regional open space amenities; expand Diridon Station to create a grand transit station of architectural and functional significance; enhance existing residential neighborhoods and reinforce downtown living with additional high-density residential development; create a high activity, lively pedestrian environment with excellent connectivity to downtown destinations and regional transit; provide a variety of commercial and mixed use development opportunities, ranging from larger scale corporate or institutional sites to incremental, infill development zones.
4. Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Neighborhood Improvement Plans (original plans and updates) for Burbank/Del Monte, Delmas Park, and Greater Gardner.
5. City of San Jose Economic Development Strategy and Fiscal Study (adopted 2003 by the City Council and currently being updated) which identifies the greater Downtown Core as a key employment area, and Diridon as a major transportation gateway to Silicon Valley and a regional destination.
6. Expansion of the Downtown Core (2005 by City Council resolution). In conjunction with Strategy 2000 and the Diridon/Arena Strategic Development Plan, the Downtown Core Area boundaries in the San Jose 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram were expanded in 2005 and are as follows:
 - Coleman Avenue and the extension of Washington Street on the north,
 - 4th Street and Civic Plaza to the east (Civic Plaza area is bounded by East St. John to the north, 7th Street to the east and San Fernando Street to the south),
 - Interstate 280 to the south,
 - White Street/Stockton Avenue/Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to the west.